

A STUDY OF THE VALUE DIFFERENCES BETWEEN SOCIAL WORK
AND PERSONS IN POVERTY

A THESIS

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Significance of The Study

Social work as a profession is concerned with people and their social functioning. It (social work) holds as its basic tenets, the creation of those conditions which help to make more satisfying ways of life possible, and the development within the individual and community of capacities to live that life more adequately.¹

This concern for people can be evidenced further in the broad statement of purposes for the field of social work:

1. To assist individuals and groups to identify and resolve or minimize problems arising out of disequilibrium between themselves and their environment.
2. To identify potential areas of disequilibrium between individuals or groups and the environment in order to prevent the occurrence of disequilibrium.
3. In addition to these curative and preventive aims, to seek out, identify and strengthen the maximum potential in individuals, groups and communities.²

While social work concerns itself with all segments of society, poverty areas and the residents of such areas comprise one facet of our

¹Arthur E. Fink, The Field of Social Work, (New York: Henry Holt and Company, 1957), p. 60.

²"Anon.", "Working Definition of Social Work Practice," Social Work, National Association of Social Workers, Vol. 3(April, 1958), p. 56.

society with which it has always been concerned. Poverty has always existed in our society but it has only been in this last decade that nation wide concern and attention has been directed toward the alleviation of problems associated with poverty. This attention has been directed toward the use of all available resources to bring those, within the grips of poverty, into the mainstream of American life. This endeavor, to make possible richer lives for all, has some definite implications for the practice of social work with regard to its effectiveness in working with the poor.

This increased interest in solving the problems associated with poverty has intensified the concern of social work in looking at itself to determine whether its methodology is geared to rendering service to this segment of the population, as effectively as it might, in helping the poor cope with the many problems and situations they face. Among questions raised in this area is one as to whether the value base of social work interferes with provision of service. If such value conflict exists, methods to circumvent the problems created by the conflict should be developed.

Interest in the relation of values and social work has been expressed by social workers and their service associates. Frank Riessman, a psychiatrist closely associated with social work, feels social work is too middle class in its approach to be able to work with the poor. In his opinion, social agencies in particular reflect middle class standards of behavior and middle class values, and too often their agents (social

workers) try to impose these standards and values on the poverty client.¹

Social workers themselves are also concerned about the effectiveness of social work with the poor. Ethel Jacobs, who was involved with a group of agricultural migrants, was concerned with social work's effectiveness in working with the poor. It was her belief that the social worker needed to learn to give service in such a way that it would make sense to the poverty client. She felt that the concepts taught in schools of social work must be reexamined, "We must interpret anew our stereotyped notions of what constitutes appropriate client responses. Social work must develop new yardsticks to measure the client's ability to use treatment and the degree of his motivation and depth of insight."²

Those in agreement with Riessman (that social work is too middle class in its approach), or Ethel Jacobs (that presently social work services are not geared to the person in poverty), are indicating that social work as presently practiced is having difficulty in working with the poor. These criticisms are directed toward the very profession rooted in working with people in poverty. This profession had its roots in the elevation of the moral and physical conditions of the indigent; and so far as compatible with those objects, the relief of their necessities.³

¹Frank Riessman, Mental Health of The Poor, (New York: Free Press of Glencoe, 1964), p. 10.

²Ethel Jacobs, "New Ways of Serving Agricultural Migrants," Social Work Practice, (1965), p. 56.

³Fink, op. cit., p. 63.

Social work began in activities formerly included under such terms as charity, philanthropy, poor relief and social reform. Concern was centered around the problems of poverty, delinquency and social disorganization.

Realization that the disadvantaged and indigent should be rehabilitated did not occur until the early 1900's. Prior to that time it was believed that the poor would rather live on the public treasury than by their own efforts. This resulted in a shifting emphasis from amelioration to prevention. By 1910 social work could be described as a congeries of agencies and movements which dealt with the treatment and prevention of family breakdown, protection of neglected children, and the effects of physical and mental illness and work accidents, and other social problems in relation to groups served.¹

Social work agencies under private auspices, as late as 1929 dominated the field though there was state involvement in public welfare. It was the workers from those private agencies that gave social work its start and who attempted to form its foundation. Those workers and agencies fought for and achieved Standards, and initiated and developed social work training largely under private auspices. Private agencies, particularly the family societies, had come to carry more and more of the load of granting relief to clients and in that process certain skills and techniques of handling relief had developed. The workers had been able to see on every hand the values of such service

¹Ibid., p. 42.

to the profession as well as to the client.¹

The early 1900's also, found the settlement movement, which assisted in the growth of social work, rendering service to Old World immigrants. The settlement accepted the responsibility of helping the newcomers to find a footing to make their rich contribution to the entire country. In addition to combating material poverty and distress, they furnished opportunities for enjoyment and self-development through the arts.

Arthur Fink has stated that social work is:

...inextricably bound up with the fundamental economic conditions and changes within the social order. As the profession developed, it became clear that social workers who were called in after the damage to the individual had been done might be looked to for consultation, direction, and action before the fact. This early concern with social problems gradually expanded to working with those capacities within the individual which enable him to adjust to and use effectively his environment of things and people.²

In the spring of 1929 there were almost three million unemployed persons. This number soared to seven million by the end of 1930. Now only thirty-five years later one-fifth of the nation or 35 million people are classified as poor. The number of children to be found within the total is 15 million. This in recent years has given rise to heightened concern around the plight of people who exist in poverty. This concern which reached new heights in the 1960's set a new stage in mankind's concern about poverty. Because of unparalleled productive

¹Arthur Hillman, Neighborhood Centers Today (New York: National Federal of Settlements and Neighborhood Centers, 1960), p. 3.

²Fink, op. cit., p. 73.

capabilities and the need to use them more fully, for the first time in human history anywhere, massive poverty has now become intolerable because it is no longer unavoidable.¹

This poverty we are dealing with is not the kind due to flood and famine. It is the kind that has existed since the Industrial Revolution and is especially poignant because it exists in the midst of plenty, in cancerous pockets within the most productive and wealthy society ever created by man.²

Heightened concern has given rise to the vision of the virtual elimination of poverty in the near future. To accomplish that goal a nation wide attack to eradicate poverty was launched by President Lyndon Johnson when in his State of the Union Message of January 8, 1964 he stated:

For the first time in our history, we have the power to strike away the barriers to full participation in our society. Having the power we have the duty. Today we are asked to declare war on a domestic enemy which threatens the strength of our nation, and the welfare of our people.³

On signing the Economic Opportunity Act of 1964 he stated:

Our American answer to poverty is not to make the poor more secure in their poverty but to reach down and to help them lift themselves out of the ruts of poverty and move with the large majority along the high road of hope and prosperity.⁴

¹Leon H. Keyserling, Progress of Poverty (Washington D. C.: Conference of Economic Progress, 1964), p. 1.

²Dr. George James. "Poverty and Public Health," American Journal of Public Health (New York: American Health Association, 1955), p. 19.

³President Lyndon B. Johnson, State of the Union Message of January 8, 1964.

⁴U. S. Health, Education and Welfare, Indicators, (1964), p. 2.

A poverty area that is presently receiving help from the Federal Government is Hough of Cleveland, Ohio. This area in 1962, had a population of 80,000 people of which 42% were below 21 years of age and 6.2% were over 65 years of age. In a 1965 report from the Research Department of the Welfare Federation of Cleveland it was found that of the 2,202 recorded births in Hough, 500 were illegitimate. The local Welfare Department in 1962 served over 2,500 cases of General Relief and close to 2,500 cases of Aid to Dependent Children. There were 2,926 unemployed males or 13.3% of Cleveland's unemployed males, as well as 32% of the city's crime of which 5% are juvenile offenses.

Within the area are four elementary schools, one Junior-Senior High School, one occupational school. There are six high schools that can be attended outside of the area. Though the facilities are available, 70% of the residents have less than a high school education.¹

Hough is primarily an overcrowded residential area. The businesses in the area are small shops, taverns and a few small industrial establishments.

Streets, sidewalks and other physical aspects of the community show signs of gross neglect, which can be attributed to insufficient provision of city service, and due to the attitudes of residents, There is a high rate of absentee land ownership in the area. Often the absentee owned properties are not adequately maintained, resulting

¹Statistics Obtained from the Welfare Federation of Cleveland, Ohio.

in numerous "eyesores" in the neighborhood. The presence of these buildings tend to discourage the resident home owners from improving their homes.¹

The heightened concern for poverty, and the criticisms aimed at social work in its work with the poor, caused this writer to be interested in the value base of social work and the values associated with poverty. The writer was concerned as to whether a value-conflict existed between the values of social work and those of the poor. He was further interested in finding out what methods in social work had developed or was in the process of developing to deal with the problems affecting its service to the poor if a value conflict was found to exist between social work and the poor.

Purpose

The purposes of the study were to review relevant literature:

1. To ascertain whether differences between the value base of social work and poverty exist.
2. To ascertain special problems in rendering social work service to the poor as a result of such value conflict.
3. To ascertain approaches utilized by social work in providing effective service to the poor.

Method of Procedure

The procedure of this study was to explore pertinent articles in four social work journals: Social Case Work, Journal of Social

¹Clarence E. Barnes, Changing Values of Negro Boys From Fatherless Families, An Experimental Research Project at Goodrich-Bell Neighborhood Center of Cleveland, Ohio (Cleveland: By the author, 1963), p. 2.

Work, Social Service Review; and Proceedings of the Conference on Social Welfare from 1961 to 1965. All relevant articles listed in the indexes between the time period mentioned were systematically examined to gather data.

Systematizing the review of the indexes was as follows. It was felt by the writer that articles dealing with values would not necessarily use the term "value" in their title. Therefore, the indexes were reviewed seeking articles around the following subjects:

1. Values
2. Poor or Poverty
3. Lower Class or Social Class
4. Public Assistance or Public Welfare

It was further felt that articles dealing with any one of the above subjects would, from time to time, mention the value system of poverty. It was further assumed that the articles, to be found in the literature would include new approaches to problems pointed out in the articles.

The titles of articles, which were used to determine the possible relevance of an article to this study, yielded 52 such articles. These articles were used to gather data on the following questions:

1. Do differences exist between the value base of social work and the values of the poor?
2. Have special problems, in rendering service, developed as a result of value conflict?
3. What is social work doing to alleviate the problems in order that it may more effectively offer service to the poor?

Data on each question were placed in the six categories listed below:

1. In terms of long range goals.
2. In terms of short range goals.
3. In terms of attitudes toward self.
4. In terms of family responsibility.
5. In terms of accepting and offering help.
6. In terms of verbal communications.

Articles from literature other than those found in social work journals were included only if they related to the study and served as background information in the study.

Scope and Limitations

The scope of the study was limited to a review of articles in the following social work journals: Social Service Review, Social Case Work, Journal of Social Work, and the Proceedings of the National Conference on Social Welfare.

The study included all of those articles that were relevant to the purposes of the study and were in the journals within the years of 1961-1965. Articles from literature other than those found in social work journals listed were included only if they related to the study.

The study was limited further by the writer's limited experience in the area of research.

CHAPTER II

VALUES

Discussion of Values

Values are assumptions, largely unconscious, of what is right and important. A set of values forms the core of every culture, and the fundamental characteristics of any culture are a reflection of its basic values.¹ If there were no common values defining the proper use of various means, men would be in endless conflict among themselves, for nothing would put a stop to the "calculating of proximate utilities each might get from another's activities."² This would create social chaos.

Defined values are the formulations of preferred behavior held by individuals and social groups. They imply a usual preference for certain means, ends, and conditions of life, often being accompanied by strong feeling. The belief in certain values causes the believer to strive toward upholding those beliefs, even though strain and discomfort may develop.

¹Kimball Young and Raymond W. Mack, Sociology and Social Life (New York: American Book Company, 1959), p. 70.

²Bernard Barber, Social Stratification (New York: Harcourt, Brace and Company, 1957), p. 3.

Values, it should be remembered, are criteria not actualities of conduct. Actualization may reveal that a particular value is not as important as once believed. When events occur that cause doubt, values may become objects of conscious and critical awareness. Moreover, in the course of time, unnoticed changes in meaning and in the internal relationships among values are likely to occur. Actualization, then, may bring conflict to light.

Change in belief over a period of time may also create value conflict. If conditions change, according to E. M. Albert, but values do not, the resulting lag will probably cause disturbing currents. The degree of integration of values with life conditions, whether there is change or persistence, is critical, when seeking the source of value conflict.¹

In the United States it is not unusual to refer to American values as though there was one American value system. However, the United States has long been a multicultural community. The internal diversity of the American population (language, religion, values and customs) is a great source of fundamental value conflict.

Within the United States, the simplest and most obvious set of sub-cultural differences follow regional lines. Regional cultural contrasts are often intensified by the contrasts between rural and urban patterns and by social differences related to variations of social status, occupational, economic level and educational. Many

¹Ethel M. Albert, "Conflict and Change in American Values, A Culture-Historical Approach" Ethics, LXXIV (1963-64), p. 20.

sociologists feel that there is no such thing as American culture, but instead, that there is a conglomeration of subcultures along the same lines as mentioned above.¹

Subcultures are distinguishable from one another and from the dominant culture by such obvious characteristics as language, clothing, gesture, and etiquette. In large industrial societies, like the United States, there are groups of persons who share the total culture but also have a set of behaviors peculiar to the group. Such shared learned behaviors which are common to a specific group or category are called subcultures.

With this definition of subculture, one in this country that is presently receiving nationwide attention is the poverty group or the poor.

Alex Poinsett uniquely defined the state of poverty and those within its grips as follows:

Poverty is taking your children to the hospital and waiting...with no one even taking your name--then returning (day after day) until they finally get around to you.

Poverty is a blind man seeking welfare aid but shunted like a billiard ball from official to official then plopped in a corner pocket and forgotten.

Poverty is (the) landlady who turns off the heat when she leaves for work in the morning and turns it back on at six when she returns. It's being helpless to do anything about it....

Poverty is having the welfare investigators break in at four a. m. and cut off your welfare check...because they found a pair of men's house slippers in the attic where your brother left them when he visited....

¹Ibid., p. 24.

Poverty is knowing not to worry about changing clothes, or knowing not to look at them too fondly.

Poverty is knowing a great deal about how to survive on little money, knowing how to buy stale bread at low cost, or soda pop instead of milk for your kids....

Poverty is a family sleeping in one bed together when it's cold.¹

The term poverty separates the poor from the non-poor. One method of making this separation is by the use of a dollar sign which reflects a judgment of the minimum needs below which an individual cannot subsist or does live adequately or lives in deprivation.

A summary of the contemporary practice of private and public agencies concerned with the problems of the poor reveals a great variety of definitions, of those who fall in this class. In spite of these differences clusters appear at three levels. The three levels of poverty most generally used are:

1. Minimum subsistence (\$2,500 per year for a family of four)
2. Minimum adequacy (\$3,500 per year for a family of four)
3. Minimum comfort (\$5,500 per year for a family of four)

By these standards there are 20, 46, or 70 million "poor" in the United States today.²

The amount of concern and attention for poverty at the present time could lead one to believe that it is a new phenomenon. Henry George in 1869 spoke of the United States as a land where amid great

¹Alex Poinsett, "Poverty Amid Plenty," Ebony, XX (August, 1965), p. 105.

²Oscar Oranti, "Poverty in America," Poverty in America, (Ann Arbor: The University of Michigan Press, 1965), p. 24.

wealth, men died of starvation. Franklin D. Roosevelt referred to one-third of the nation being ill-clothed, ill-housed and ill-nourished.

While a historical problem, the nature of poverty, over the years, has taken on a definite change. The immigrant saw poverty as a temporary situation for he always looked forward to the day when his family could gain greater access to opportunities. Today, there is some indication that the poor, feel that poverty is a permanent way of life with little hope for either themselves or their children. This has resulted from the fact that today the labor market does not have a place for the under-educated, the under-skilled or the old. The future, for those in poverty, is the very bleak picture of a vicious cycle of poverty. It has been established that a poverty child of today will have difficulty in the area of employment and social participation.

In the past the poor were thought of with contempt and as those least fit in the survival of the fittest. The poor were blamed for their condition and situation, and thought to be lazy, thriftless and immoral.

Presently, according to Poverty in America, the poor are viewed with some compassion but are also frequently seen as immoral, unmotivated and childlike in their behavior. There is still a public lack of appreciation of the debilitating effects of poverty and the stresses that result from a lack of adequate resources. In some cases, these attitudes permeate the leadership elites of communities, making the task of poverty reduction more difficult. In truth, history has widened the social distance between the poor and affluent since life in suburbia makes it possible for the affluent to carry on day-to-day

activities with little intimate awareness of the poor or their problems in the crowded urban ghettos.¹

Values Associated with Class

Poverty is associated with the lower class in our society. Concerning the values of the poor Hyman Rodman has developed what he terms the Lower Class Value Stretch. He maintains that the dominant, conventional, middle-class values have relevance for all members of the society, including its lower-class members. Since many middle-class values, however, are inappropriate to the conditions of lower-class life, the members of the lower class are faced with a problem. Once this value problem has been solved within the lower-class as in the development of the value stretch, then this solution is learned by many in the next generation who therefore do not face the same problem all over again. Here Rodman is saying that the Lower-class has middle-class values but will add values that often oppose middle-class values in order to alleviate problems in their day to day life. When this happens the value system of the lower-class has extended or stretched.²

Walter Miller points out six major concerns of the lower class culture. Miller, who has termed these concerns "focal concerns"

¹Louis A. Ferman, Joyce L. Dornbluh and Alan Haber (eds.), Poverty in America (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1965), p. 8.

²Hyman Rodam, "The Lower-Class Value Stretch," Social Forces, 42. (December, 1963), p. 205.

rather than values, feels these concerns are trouble, toughness, smartness, excitement, fate and autonomy.

Trouble.-- Concern over trouble is a dominant feature of lower class culture. The concept has various shades of meaning. There is an "overt commitment to the non-law abiding such as getting into trouble is prestigious. An example of this is gang membership and participation.

Toughness.-- The most important components of toughness are physical prowess, evidenced both by demonstrated possession of strength and endurance and athletic skill; "masculinity" symbolized by a distinctive complex of acts and avoidances.

The intense concern over toughness in lower class culture is probably related to the fact that a significant proportion of lower class males are reared in a predominantly female household, and lack consistently essential components of a "male" role.

Smartness.-- This involves the capacity to achieve a valued entity-- material goods, personal status -- through a maximum use of mental agility and a minimum use of physical effort.

This capacity has an extremely long tradition in lower-class culture, and is highly valued. Lower class culture can be characterized as "non-intellectual" only if intellectualism is defined specifically in terms of control over a particular body of formally learned knowledge imparted by formal educational institutions.

Excitement.-- Many of the most characteristic features of lower class life are related to the search for excitement or "thrill." Involved here is the highly prevalent use of alcohol by both sexes and the widespread use of gambling of all kinds.

Many lower class individuals feel that their lives are subject to a set of forces over which they have relatively little control. Miller points out that these are not directly equated with the supernatural forces of formally organized religions, but relate more to a concept of destiny, or man as a pawn of magical powers.

Autonomy.-- The extent and nature of control over the behavior of the individual -- an important concern in most cultures -- has a special significance and is distinctively patterned in lower class culture. Discrepancy between what is overtly valued and what is covertly sought is particularly striking in this area. On the overt level there is a strong frequently expressed resentment of the idea of external controls yet there is marked discrepancy between expressed sentiment and what is covertly valued. Many lower class people appear to seek out a highly restrictive social environment wherein stringent external controls are maintained over their behavior.

Miller ends by saying that the lower class culture is a distinctive tradition many centuries old with an integrity of its own.¹

Herbert Gans feels that the lower class group is distinguished by the female-based family and the marginal male. The family circle includes only female relatives while the male, whether husband or lover, is physically present only part of the time. He is not recognized as a stable or dominant member of the household.

¹Walter B. Miller, "Focol Cerns of Lower Class Culture," Poverty in America, ed. Ferman, Kornbluh and Harper (Ann Arbor: The University of Michigan Press, 1955), p. 261.

For lower class men, life is almost totally unpredictable. If they have sought stability at all, it has slipped from their grasp so quickly and consistently that they no longer pursue it. From childhood on, their only real gratification came from action seeking, but even these are few and short lived. Relationships with women are brief and many men remain single all their lives. Usually, the lower-class individual gravitates from one job to another, with little hope or interest of keeping a job for any length of time. Education is rejected by the male for all of its aims are diametrically opposed to action seeking.¹

It will be noted that lower-class was used synonymously with poor or poverty. According to Sociology and Social Life, the lower class is divided into Upper-Lower and Lower-Lower. The former includes lower white collar employees, semi-skilled factory workers and service workers. The latter includes unskilled workers, families on relief and transients. For the purpose of this study lower-class will refer to the lower-lower class or poverty group.²

Values of Social Work

The profession of social work is the art of bringing various resources to bear on individual, group, and community needs by the

¹Herbert J. Gans, "Subcultures and Class," Poverty in America, Ferman, Kornbluh and Harper (Ann Arbor: The University of Michigan Press, 1955), p. 302.

²Young, loc. cit., p. 189.

application of the scientific method of helping people to help themselves.¹

As was stated previously, social work had its beginning in working with the poor. It was bound up with the fundamental economic conditions and changes within the social order. The early concern with social problems gradually expanded to working with those capacities within the individual which enabled him to adjust to and use effectively his environment of things and people.²

A profession like social work consists of a limited group of persons who have acquired a special skill and are therefore able to perform a skill better than the average person...members profess to have acquired special knowledge, by training or experience or both, so that they may advise or serve others in that special field.³

The helping process of social work, in the words of Gisela Konopka, "is strongly influenced by the profession's values and its views of the people with whom it is concerned."⁴ She felt that the key values of social work are ethical ones, since they concern themselves with interpersonal relations. They are "justice" and "responsibility" combined with a less defined, but somewhat different, value

¹Herbert Stroup, Social Work (New York: American Book Co., 1960), p. 1.

²Ibid., p. 5.

³Harold H. Titus, Ethics For Today (New York: American Book Co., 1954), p. 203.

⁴Gisela Konopka, Social Group Work: A Helping Process, (Englewood Cliffs: Prentice-Hall, 1964), p. 69.

of "mental health." "Justice" means the basic acceptance of the dignity of each human being regardless of any specific attributes, such as race, sex, economic status, intellectual endowment, physical prowess, and so forth, that might differentiate him from others. Justice does not imply that all people are the same or require that all be treated the same; it implies only that all be accorded the same love, and the same acceptance, and the same opportunity.¹

Responsibility includes the awareness of the interdependence of human beings of the acceptance of the rights of others as well as of one's own, and of the concept of the brotherhood of all people, the concept that each is his "brother's keeper."

For the purpose of this study the author used as the value base of social work those which are stated in its working definition of social work. According to this source, the value base of social work is as follows:

1. The individual is the primary concern of this society.
2. There is interdependence between individuals in this society.
3. They have social responsibility for one another.
4. There are human needs common to each person, yet each person is essentially unique and different from others.
5. An essential attribute of a democratic society is the realization of the full potential of each individual and the assumption of his social responsibility through active participation in society.
6. Society has a responsibility to provide ways in which obstacles to this realization can be overcome or prevented.

¹Ibid.

These concepts provide the philosophical foundation for social work practice.¹

In reviewing the values of the poor and the value base of social work obvious differences can be found.

Social work speaks of a responsibility for one another, yet we see that the poor are more self orientated, they seek self gratification with no mention of their neighbor. This is even more evident when considering that the male or father is not expected to be the father image to his family.

Individual realization of potential is not a reality for those in poverty for their resources are so limited. As was stated, the cycle of poverty leaves a child with little or no opportunities when he reaches adulthood.

Social work goes on to speak of active participation by individuals in their society, yet the poverty person feels it is society that places him in his position. Therefore, he has no desire to be an active participant in it.

With the situation mentioned above, question can be raised as to whether social work can be effective in working with the poor when the value base of the poor and social work seem to differ.

¹NASW, "Working Definition of Social Work Practice," Social Work, 3 (April, 1958), p. 56.

CHAPTER III

ANALYSIS OF DATA

Presentation of Data

A systematic examination of the indexes of the selected social work journals yielded fifty-two articles that appeared to be of importance to this study. Use of the categories to gather data related to the purposes of the study revealed that eight of the fifty-two articles contained information pertinent to the study. The author was concerned with organization of data on the six points in relation to each purpose. These points were long range goals, attitudes toward self, attitudes toward family responsibility, attitudes in accepting and offering help and verbal communication. Data collected as related to the purposes were as follows.

Purpose 1.-- This purpose was to ascertain whether there were differences between the value base of social work and the values associated with those living in poverty. Search of the literature did not reveal specific differences between long and short range goals, but there was material in values related to goals for both social work and the poor. The following data were found in the articles concerning values pertinent to goals.

The lower class subculture believes that they should live for today and let tomorrow take care of itself. This

segment of the society is present oriented.¹

This point of view that the lower class subculture is present rather than future orientated is supported by Herzoz who stated:

...the lower class subculture is present oriented rather than future oriented.²

Both the values of the clients and those of social work as related to goals are considered in the article by Hellenbrand. According to that author:

Social work orientation is different from certain lower-class subcultures in relation to temporal focus and the modality of human activity. The social work culture is future oriented.³

Of interest to this study were several statements in the literature which were concerned with values as related to the attitudes of the poor toward self. Material was found also which discussed the attitudes of social work toward self. These statements were as follows:

...the poor are 'self centered' and the boys should be 'tough' and able to 'con or outsmart another individual and engage in activities of risk and danger.' For the poor 'Everything rides on the dice...man is a powerless pawn of destiny.'⁴

...the poor have 'less belief in their control over their own destinies'.⁵

¹Shirley C. Hellenbrand, "Client Value Orientation," Social Case-work, 42 (April, 1961), p. 164.

²Elizabeth Herzoz, "Some Assumptions About the Poor," Social Service Review, 37 (December, 1963), p. 340.

³Hellenbrand, loc. cit.

⁴Hellenbrand, Ibid.

⁵Herzoz, op. cit.

...the chronically impoverished show almost equal preference for harmony with nature and subjugation to nature's alternatives.¹

...a study of unemployed males found a 'lack of faith in self when seeking employment.'²

According to the article by Hellenbrand:

Social work is 'All American' in its adherence to the creed of fight and mastery, man can create his own environment and that man has the right to self determination.³

Attitudes toward the family were expressed in the following terms:

...among the poor can be found 'large numbers of female based households.'⁴

...a parent said that in caring for his son, 'I would knock the hell out of him, cause he can't be no sissy up in this here jungle.'⁵

Social work and American values state that, 'man is expected to support his children and if necessary work for a living.'⁶

Some material was found in the literature which was pertinent to values related to offering and accepting help on the part of social

¹Leonard Schneiderman, 'Value Orientation Preferences of Chronic Relief Recipients,' Journal of Social Work, 9(July, 1964), p. 14.

²'Helping the Unemployed Father,' Social Case Work, 43 (October, 1962), p. 423.

³Hellenbrand, loc. cit.

⁴Ibid.

⁵Herzog, loc. cit.

⁶'Helping the Unemployed Father,' Social Case Work, 43 (October, 1962).

work and the poor. These references were as follows:

Strangeness- that is, distance between non-users and professional helpers can be observed in a variety of ways. Non-use of help is associated with less occupational skill, less education, and lower socioeconomic status in general.

As some have put it, these differences in values reflect distance between the helpers and the non-user as compared to the greater closeness and 'congruence of belief between helpers and users.¹

Real differences do exist between the social classes and the social worker must know and be sensitive to them if his efforts at intervention are to be constructive.²

No evidence was found which related specifically to goals in terms of verbal communications.

Purpose 2.-- This purpose was to ascertain whether special problems existed in rendering social work service to the poor as a result of value conflict between social work and the poor. Data were collected for this purpose also in relation to the aforementioned six points. Search of the literature revealed no material related directly to problems in rendering social work service for any of the categories except for those concerned with accepting and offering help and verbal communications. Data in the literature related to accepting and offering help were as follows.

The low transferability of techniques (techniques borrowed or derived from psychoanalysis) has probably resulted from workers lack of professional education and from rapid staff turnover, as well as from characteristics of the client population.³

¹Elizabeth McBroom, "Helping AFDC Families," Social Service Review 39 (March, 1965), p. 391.

²Schneiderman, loc. cit.

³McBroom, op. cit.

If it is justified to assume the existence of a culture of classes, then one can assume that different classes undergo different kinds of experiences, integrating these experiences in different terms.

A person's values affect his attitudes toward life and determine his ways of solving problems. It is safe to assume that the persons who apply to social agencies for treatment have different value orientations. It should follow that these variations in values will affect the content and form of the treatment process.¹

A reference related to problems associated with verbal communication was as follows:

Social workers who serve the impoverished may be engaged in an intercultural enterprise and that problems in communications and joint goal setting are to be expected as a consequence of beginning from different first assumptions about life and values.²

Purpose 3.-- This purpose was to ascertain approaches utilized by social work to provide effective services to the poor. There was a paucity of material on this in the articles studied but some information was available for the categories dealing with attitudes toward self, and an accepting and offering help. In working with poor the following statements were found in the literature as suggested approaches social work might take in relation to the client's attitude toward self.

Not possible to suggest treatment techniques for problems of this scope...where outer and inner forces combine to imprison the person in a destiny which seems so bleak that he can see no purpose in struggling.³

¹Arthur Plum, "Values and Aspirations as a Focus for Treatment," Social Work Practice, 1963 (New York: Columbia University Press, 1963), p. 31.

²Schneiderman, op. cit.

³Hellenbrand, op. cit.

Must first realize that the impulse to struggle, to endeavor to intervene actively and positively in one's destiny, is not a dominant trait in all subcultures.¹

Attention in the literature was given last to approaches social work could utilize in offering help to those in poverty.

Treatment needs to take into account the imprint of the cultural value system on personality, as well as the more familiar effects of familial jealousies, hospitalities and several identifications. A treatment orientation that includes cultural factors might lead to new approaches perhaps along the lines of re-education and re-socialization.²

Real differences do exist between the social classes and the social worker must know and be sensitive to them if his efforts to intervention are to be constructive.³

We must learn to give our services in such a way that they make sense to these particular clients. Concepts taught in school of social work must be reexamined.⁴

Values must be appreciated as reflecting both the frame of reference within which a person acts and the life experiences that befall him. Only then can the helping process complete its cycle of giving and receiving, and become stabilized in the capacity and readiness of the individual human being to develop and use his own resources with conscious well ordered intent, in the interest of his own happiness.⁵

Analysis of Data

Only a limited number of articles were found which were related to the purposes of this study. The articles that were useful contained

¹Hellenbranc, Ibid.

²Hellenbrand, Ibid.

³Schneiderman, loc. cit.

⁴Plum, loc. cit.

⁵Mary F. McCormick, "The Role of Values in the Helping Process" Social Case Work, 42 (January, 1961), p. 2.

material pertinent to all of the purposes. In reference to the first purpose the literature revealed that value differences do exist between social work and those in poverty. According to the literature, among the poor can be found a large number of female based households and they are present oriented rather than future oriented. The literature revealed, also, that the poor lack faith in self when seeking employment, and have less belief than other segments of the population in their control over their destinies. The poor as described in these articles are self-centered with expectation that the boys should be tough. In terms of accepting social work help the literature indicated that non-use of help is associated with lower socioeconomic status in general.

Social work values, as revealed in these selected articles, are different in that social work is future oriented, and believes that man can create his own environment and has a right to self-determination.

Purpose two was concerned with problems related to rendering social work help in light of value conflict between social work values and the values of the poor. Analysis of the data related to this purpose showed that problems do exist because of the value conflict. According to the articles involved in the study, these problems exist in terms of offering help and in terms of verbal communications. The literature pointed out that since a person's values affected his attitudes toward life and influence his ways of solving problems, the persons seeking help at social agencies have different orientations and thus, this will affect the treatment. Problems were indicated also in terms of the need of the social worker to understand differences between classes and to be sensitive to these differences if his efforts at helping will be constructive.

There was material in the literature also to support problems related to communication between client and social worker on the basis of value differences which have resulted from different assumptions about life and values.

An example of this conflict can be seen in that the lower class client feels he is a powerless pawn of destiny while social work believes in the right of self determination.

The literature supports the fact that there are value differences between social work and the poor and that special problems exist in rendering social work help because of this value conflict. Question is raised as to what social work is doing in light of these problems. The third purpose of this study was concerned with this area. Literature related to this purpose seemed to stress the need to understand this type of client in terms of what he is really like and to modify treatment in relation to realistic expectations. An example of this was cited in that it was discovered in a study of unemployed fathers that the worker had to accompany the father to help him in the employment process and to continue to support him even after he was hired. Emphasis was placed on giving service in such a way that the service make sense to this particular group of clients. It was felt that this approach might result from a reexamination of concepts taught in school of social work.

Analysis of the data, therefore, revealed for the most part general approaches to work with the poor in which stress was put on recognition of the value differences between the poor and the social worker. Awareness of these differences could lead to more sensitivity on the part of the worker in rendering service which the client can find useful in his own frame of reference.

CHAPTER IV

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

The profession of social work had its inception in working with the poor both in public and private agencies. It was the private agencies and workers from those agencies that built the foundation of the profession,

In 1929 there were almost three million unemployed persons, today there are thirty-five million people classified as poor. From that total we find that fifteen million are children. This poverty which is found in the most wealthy society ever created by man has brought about nation wide interest in the plight of those caught in its grips.

In 1964 President Lyndon Johnson spoke of poverty as being a domestic enemy and proclaimed a nation wide "war on poverty." A result of this heightened interest in the poor was that several criticisms were leveled at the profession of social work. These criticisms dealt with social work's effectiveness in working with the poor. It was said that the profession and its practitioners were too middle class in their approach and that presently social work services are not geared to the persons in poverty. This factor and the profession's interest in the poor as well as the rest of society has stimulated the author to be interested in the value base of social work and the values of the poor. The author was concerned as to whether value conflict existed between social work and the poor. Further he was interested in what methods

social work had developed or was in the process of developing to deal with the problems affecting its service to the poor if value conflict was found to exist.

Values form the core of every culture. They are the formulation of preferred behavior held by individuals and social groups. Without values there would be social chaos.

Concerning values there is some evidence which reveals possible value conflict between social work and the poor. Social work speaks of a responsibility for one another, individual realization of potential and that a person should be an active participant in ~~one's~~ society. Those in poverty, on the other hand, are self-orientated, they live in a situation that offers little or no self advancement. They feel that society has placed them in their present situation, therefore, there is little willingness to participate in the very thing they feel is the cause for their conditions. This alone raises a question concerning whether social work can be effective with the poor when there are value differences between the two groups.

This study surveyed selected items from social work literature to determine whether value differences existed between the profession and the poor, whether such differences produced problems in offering effective service and if differences and problems did exist whether the profession had suggested approaches to alleviate the problems in offering service.

Information from the literature was classified into six categories. The data were found in eight articles from fifty-two articles studied by the author and were from five social work journals for the years 1961 through 1965.

Findings

The findings in the study as related to the purposes were as follows. In reference to Purpose 1 the findings were:

1. Value differences do exist between social work and those who live in poverty.
2. These differences are in terms of orientation to life, attitudes toward self and attitudes toward receiving help.

In relation to Purpose 2 the findings were:

1. Problems in rendering social work service to the poor seem to result from the conflict in values between social work and those living in poverty.
2. Problems seemed to be in the realm of the need for social workers to have more awareness of the value differences. This knowledge of the value conflict would be helpful to the social worker in determining treatment techniques.
3. Problems seemed to be present also in the area of communication in that the value differences could create a situation in which the service offered did not make sense to the client.

In reference to Purpose 3 the findings were:

1. Social work seems aware of its difficulties in working effectively with the poor.
2. Stress was placed on utilizing methods in providing service that took into account the reality of the cultural situation of the poor.
3. The possibility that concepts taught in schools of social work needed to be reexamined in terms of their appropriateness in working with those in poverty.

Conclusions

On the basis of the findings the following conclusions were drawn:

1. The paucity of material in the literature related to this subject indicates a need for further serious study in this area.

2. The available literature supported the thinking of some that there are definite value differences between social work and the poverty group.
3. To assist in the alleviation of poverty social work must find ways of solving the problems which interfere with its working more effectively with the poor.

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